

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-13

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3305

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 10835

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: MR 2 DAILY SIT REP, JUNE 17

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON DAO SGN USSAG DTD 17 JUN FROM NHA
TRANG

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L NHA TRANG 0618

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: MR 2 DAILY SIT REP, JUNE 17

1. SECURITY SITUATION: AS THE NEW PHASE OF THE CEASE- FIRE
MOVED INTO ITS SECOND 24- HOUR PERIOD, PEACE AND TRANQUILITY
HOVERED RESTLESSLY OVER MOST OF MR 2. ALTHOUGH SCATTERED
MINING INCIDENTS AND ATTACKS BY FIRE CONTINUED TO OCCUR, NO
ENEMY GROUND ATTACKS WERE REPORTED ANYWHERE IN THE REGION.
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KONTUM CONTINUES TO DEFY THE TREND TOWARD DESCENDING PEACE AS RVNAF EFFORTS TO RETAKE TRUNG NGHIA AND POLEI KRONG PRESS AHEAD. BINH THUAN, WITH FIVE INCIDENTS (NONE MAJOR) IS THE REGION' S SECOND PRINCIPAL DISTURBER OF THE CEASE- FIRE CALM.

2. MR 2 REGIONAL HQS IN NHA TRANG AND POLOFFS IN THE FIELD REPORT A TOTAL OF 19 INCIDENTS DURING THE 24- HOUR REPORTING PERIOD. FIVE OF THESE WERE MININGS IN PHU YEN, KHANH HOA, NINH THUAN, AND BINH DINH. BINH DINH ALSO REPORTS TWO CASUALTY- FREE ATTACKS BY FIRE IN THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE QUIET DAY (RELATIVELY) IN THAT NORMALLY CONTENTIOUS PROVINCE. CASUALTIES FOR REPORTING PERIOD: RVNAF: 2 KIA, 22 WIA, 4 MIA; ENEMY: 10 KIA.

3. SITUATION IN KONTUM CONTINUES TO OVERSHADOW OTHER EVENTS IN MR 2 WITH RVNAF FORCES DETERMINED TO RETAKE THE VILLAGES OF TRUNG NGHIA AND POLEI KRONG STILL TENACIOUSLY HELD BY NVA FORCES. POLOFF KONTUM REPORTS THAT VISIT OF MR 2 CG TOAN TO KONTUM ON JUNE 14 RESULTED IN ORDERS TO 23 RD DIVISION TO REOCCUPY THE LOST VILLAGES REGARDLESS OF NAY NEW CEASE- FIRE DEADLINE. 23 RD DIV COMMANDER BGEN. CAM REMAINS IN CHARGE OF RVNAF OPERATIONS TO ACCOMPLISH THE OBJECTIVE. AN ADDITIONAL 23 RD DIVISION UNIT, PROBABLY A BATTALION FROM PLEIKU PROVINCE, IS BEING SENT TO KONTUM AND IS EXPECTED TO REPLACE THE RF UNITS THAT HAVE FAILED TO CROSS THE DAK BLA AND THUS ENTER TRUNG NGHIA FROM THE SOUTH.

4. SO FAR AS CAN BE DETERMINED, THE 1 ST BN, 44 TH REGT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO ADVANCE BEYOND THE EASTERN OUTSKIRTS OF TRUNG NGHIA, AND UP TO THIS POINT THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN NO REAL ARVN PROGRESS WESTWARD. THE DIVISION RECON CO INSERTED BY AIR INTO AN LZ NORTH OF TRUNG NGHIA ON JUNE 14 DOES NOT APPEAR ON FRIENDLY OB MAPS AND MAY HAVE COME BACK DOWN TO THE KONTUM CITY- TRUNG NGHIA ROAD AND JOINED UP WITH THE 1/44 TH. CONTACTS CONTINUE IN GENERAL AREA AT UNDIMINISHED RATE; THERE HAS BEEN SOME FIGHTING AT DAK LECK BRIDGE, WHICH IS ACTUALLY BEHIND (EAST OF) THE 1/44 TH' S POSITION.

5. ONE SECTOR OFFICER IMPLIED TO KONTUM POLOFF THAT NEITHER ARVN NOR RF HAS BEEN AS AGGRESSIVE AS IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN; THIS, PLUS TENACIOUS NVA DEFENSE OF WHAT THEY HAVE GRABBED, PROBABLY CONFIDENTIAL

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EXPLAINS LACK OF FRIENDLY PROGRESS. ARVN ALSO INTENDS TO RETAKE DAK ROCOT VILLAGE NORTHWEST OF KONTUM CITY, WHICH THEY REGARD AS THEIRS. ARVN CLAIMS TO HAVE DAK ROCOT SURROUNDED, BUT SAME OFFICER ADMITTED TO POLOFF THAT FRIENDLY FORCES HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO ENTER THE VILLAGE ITSELF. FIGHTING CONTINUES THERE AND AT NEARBY NGOK BAY HILL.

6. TO THE SOUTHWEST OF KONTUM, ENEMY UNITS ATTACKED RF AT PLEI TCHAR ON JUNE 16 AND WERE DRIVEN BACK; HOWEVER, ENEMY STILL HOLDS NOW OTHERWISE UNINHABITED PLEI KLOR.

7. CANADIAN GEN. MCALPINE TOLD CONGEN OFFICERS IN NHA TRANG EVENING OF JUNE 16 THAT HE HAD NOTED 50 OR MORE WOUNDED RVNAF TROOPS IN KONTUM EARLIER IN DAY. KONTUM POLOFF REPORTS THESE WIA INCLUDE SOME NEWLY- WOUNDED AND OTHERS WOUNDED AT OUTSET OF FIGHTING JUNE 7-9 WHO IN ADDITION CONTRACTED MALARIA. IN ALL, NEARLY 100 RVNAF WIA SPENT JUNE 15 AND MUCH OF JUNE 16 AT AIRFIELD (WHERE TWO OF THEM DIED) AWAITING PROMISED VNAF MEDEVAC FLIGHTS ON QUI NHON THAT NEVER ARRIVED. (MCALPINE VISITING PLEIKU MORNING JUNE 17 AND BEN HET IN AFTERNOON).

8. THE LEVEL OF ARTILLERY FIRE EXPENDED DURING THE KONTUM ACTIVITY HAS RISEN STEADILY OVER THE LAST TWO WEEKS, AVERAGING 1500 ROUNDS PER DAY. DURING THE PAST TWO DAYS, IT HAS PEAKED AT 1800 ROUNDS PER DAY. POLOFF KONTUM BELIEVES IT LIKELY THAT NVA WILL SOON CONTACT ARVN BY RADIO PROPOSING TALKS BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES. THE NVA WOULD HOPE THEREBY TO STYMIE THE ARVN ATTACK.

9. REACTIONS TO PARIS COMMUNIQUE: KHANH HOA PROVINCE CHIEF, COL. LY BA PHAM, TOLD CONGEN POLOFF HE BELIEVES COMMUNISTS HAVE NO INTENTION OF HONORING THE CEASE- FIRE AGREEMENTS. GVN FORCES MUST RETAIN THEIR STRENGTH, HE OPINED, IN THE FACE OF THESE DIVERSIONARY EFFORTS BY THE COMMUNISTS DESIGNED TO AFFORD THEM TIME TO CATCH THEIR BREATH AND STRENGTHEN THEIR FORCES. THE COMMUNISTS HAVE NO INTENTION OF ABANDONING THE MILITARY STRUGGLE FOR A POLITICAL STRUGGLE WHICH THEY WOULD INVARIABLY LOSE, PHAM SAID. DESPITE THE ASSURANCES OF NIXON AND KISSENGER TO THE CONTRARY, PHAM BELIEVES IT IS NOT PP THE INTEREST OF THE COMMUNISTS TO COMPLY WITH THE AGREEMENTS. THEY WILL REVERT TO LARGE-CONFIDENTIAL

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SCALE WARFARE WHEN IT IS TO THEIR ADVANTAGE TO DO SO.

10. ARRO REP IN DARLAC REPORTS THAT REACTION TO PARIS COMMUNIQUE IN BAN ME THUOT HAS THUS FAR BEEN MUTED. ICCS REPS HAVE NOT YET SEEN TEXT BUT CANDELS AND INDODELS VOICED DOUBT THAT AGREEMENT WOULD BE WORKABLE WITHOUT ACCOMPANYING CHANGE OF ATTITUDE BY OTHER SIDE. SENIOR PROVINCE OFFICIALS ARE LIKEWISE PESSIMISTIC REGARDING EFFECTIVENESS OF NEW AGREEMENT AND GOOD WILL OF THE OTHER SIDE. SOME WONDER WHETHER THIS IS FIRST OF A SERIES OF AMENDMENTS TO THE AGREEMENT AND, IF SO, WHAT FUTURE AMENDMENTS WILL ENTAIL. A LIMITED SAMPLING OF PUBLIC OPINION IN DARLAC SUGGESTS THAT THE COMMUNIQUE HAS NOT CREATED ANY NEW EXPECTATION THAT A

DURABLE PEACE IS AT HAND.
TEARE
UNQUOTE WHITEHOUSE

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